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A NEW WOODPECKER FROM MEXICO

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Ascents by the author in 1942 of three of the highest mountains of Mexico (Popocatepetl, Ixtaccihuatl, Toluca) and several crossings of the great range, which forms part of the boundary between the states of Michoacan and Mexico, the road itself reaching an altitude of nearly 10,000 feet, have made possible the collecting of eighteen specimens of the species, *Dendrocopos stricklandi*. This bird is a frequenter of very high altitudes. It was a common bird about our base camp on Mt. Popocatepetl at 13,000 feet near the upper limit of tree line. Sutton and Burleigh (Auk, 1942, 419) found a breeding pair on March 31st at Rio Frio on the eastern side of Mt. Ixtaccihuatl at an altitude of about 11,000 feet. That it occurs occasionally at lower stations is proved by the taking of our series of five specimens from Puerta Lengua de Vaca at approximately 9400 feet among a dense stand of firs with scattered oaks and by a female taken by Loetscher on April 4th on the mountains south of Las Vigas, Veracruz. I believe that the record given in the Catalogue of the Birds of the British Museum (Vol. 18, p. 244), of the taking of an adult female in January at Xochimilco on the floor of the Valley of Mexico is either an error or represents an individual driven down from the high mountains by an unusually cold winter, for snow sometimes falls even at the low altitude of Mexico City, 7415 feet. Neither Chester Lamb nor I have obtained it at lower localities in the strictly Transition Zone, which in Michoacan is the chief habitat of *stricklandi*'s nearest relative, *Dendrocopos arizonae fraterculus*.

Heretofore, the nominate form, *Dendrocopos stricklandi*, has been shown to range from Cofre de Perote, Veracruz, only to the mountains

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on the western side of the Valley of Mexico. We are dealing with two distinct forms and true *stricklandi* is confined to the eastern section of its range, namely to the Orizaba-Zempoaltepec District of the great Transverse Volcanic Biotic Province.

The birds which are found on the mountains surrounding the Valley of Mexico and thence west to the great mountain range between the states of Mexico and Michoacan, an area recently denominated the "Aztec Faunal District" of the above-mentioned Province (Trans. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist., X, No. 12, p. 219, Map), apparently represent a new form and it is herewith described:

***Dendrocopos stricklandi aztecus* subsp. nov.**

Aztec Woodpecker

Type.—Male adult in winter plumage; number 30697, collection of Robert T. Moore; Puerta Lengua de Vaca, on the boundary line between the states of Michoacan and Mexico, 15 miles east of Zitácuaro, Michoacan, altitude about 9350 feet; Oct. 17, 1941; collected by Chester C. Lamb.

Subspecific characters.—Differs in both sexes from *Dendrocopos stricklandi stricklandi* (Malherbe) in having white portions of posterior underparts immaculate or streaked chiefly on flanks instead of densely barred on flanks and entire abdomen; streaks on lower throat narrower; dark portions of upper parts blacker (less brownish); white of anterior portion of back more extensive toward nape.

Range.—Upper Transition and Temperate Zones of the great range in the western portion of the state of Mexico; thence in somewhat intergrading form east to Mt. Ixtaccihuatl.

Measurements.—About the same as those in the nominate race.

Specimens examined.—Moore Col.—*D. s. aztecus*—Boundary between states of Michoacan and Mexico: Puerta Lengua de Vaca 2 ♂ 3 ♀ (Oct. 17-28); District Federal: Mount Popocatepetl (13,000 ft.) 3 ♂ 2 im. ♂, 3 ♀ 1 im. ♀ (May 17-27); Mt. Toluca (11,000 ft.) 2 ♂ 2 ♀ (June 10-15). *D. s. stricklandi*—Biol. Sur. Col.—2 ♂ 1 ♀ (Apr. 22, Dec. 31, Jan. 1).

Remarks.—Malherbe did not give the type locality, but it is a strong probability that the type was secured in the mountains of Veracruz and specimens have been taken on the vast Mt. Orizaba massif of that area. Therefore, the author herewith restricts the type locality of *P[icus] (Leuconotopicus) stricklandi* Malherbe to the Mt. Orizaba massif.

Since the now known habitat of its nearest congener, *Dendrocopos arizonae fraterculus*, has been extended by our collections southeast and east to Tzitzio, Michoacan (shown on Rand McNally's Map as Sitzio), only 50 miles west of the type locality of *aztecus*, it is alluring to think of the two forms as possibly conspecific. However, these most eastern specimens show no approach whatever to *stricklandi* and the well-marked differences in pattern negative such an amalgamation.

Aztecus expresses itself in its truest form in the mountains of the western portion of the state of Mexico and the series of five specimens

from these mountains have one character much more pronounced than any of the specimens from farther east, namely: the extension of white on the anterior back much more prominent and in addition a second character, not previously mentioned, the nasal tufts, point of chin and anterior forehead conspicuously Tawny-Olive.

There may be an additional important character, which appears in all specimens of the topotypical series from Puerta Lengua de Vaca, namely, the apical quarter of the three outer pair of rectrices is Apricot-Orange instead of merely buffy brown as in some specimens of true *stricklandi*, as well as in some intergrades from the mountains surrounding the Valley of Mexico. This is not believed to be stain, because all the feathers of the Puerta Lengua de Vaca birds are freshly molted.

Although true *stricklandi* generally seems to be found as a breeding bird in pure stands of evergreens, chiefly pines, the Puerta Lengua de Vaca series of *aztecus* was taken at a somewhat lower altitude around 9400 feet, where oaks occur occasionally among the firs and some of the individuals were actually collected as they foraged on oak trees.